



## **Arlington Historic District Commissions Final & Approved Minutes – February 22, 2024**

Conducted by Remote Participation via ZOOM

Commissioners Present: D. Baldwin, C. Barry, P. Chaves, B. Cohen, B. LaBau,  
S. Makowka, B. Melofchik, C. Tee, J. Worden

Commissioners

Not Present: S. Savarese

Guests: P. Hatem, M. Cordero, C. Harrington, G. Lindemeyer, J. Mackey, M. Penzenik,  
D. Seltzer, K. Lubar

1. **AHDC Meeting Opens 8:00pm S. Makowka called to order at 804pm**  
**Moment of Silence in Memory of Corinne Rainville, former Town Clerk**
2. **Approval of draft minutes from January 25, 2024 – S. Makowka moved to table until next meeting. Seconded by J. Worden. Roll call vote – Baldwin-y, Barry-y, Tee-y, Worden-y, Chaves-y, Cohen-y, Melofchik-y, Makowka-y. Unanimous approval to table.**
3. **Appointment of Alternate Commissioners: Pleasant - Melofchik, Jason – Melofchik, Cohen, Chaves**
4. **Communications**
  - a. **Reminder that next AHDC Meeting is 3/21/24 (not as originally scheduled for 3/28/2024)**
  - b. **Application for 20 Oak Knoll (Lawrence) for CONA for weatherization**
5. **New Business**
  - a. **Appointment of 2024 AHDC Officers; J. Worden nominated present slate – seconded by D. Baldwin – unanimous approval. Roll call vote – Baldwin, Barry, Tee, Worden, Chaves, Cohen, Melofchik, Makowka all voted yes.**
  - b. **Formal hearing for 14 & 16 Jason St. (Pergantis) for solar panel installation.**  
Marissa Cordero gave presentation for the Applicant. S. Makowka asked that we treat the applications for the two structures separately.

14 Jason Street – 34 photos of proposed modules. Panels will be black on black. Project is about 12.920kw. Garage roof is not facing the street so not visible from street. Roof will be redone with black shingles. The Commission noted a concern on the front-facing panels. This placement is inconsistent with the guidelines and the three panels which are staggered on the front-facing roof cry out as being awkwardly placed. The commission also noted that the other roof shown in the top down plan (facing towards the lower part of the screen) with 8 panels in a rectangular pattern is consistent with the guidelines, but that the offset of the 2 other panels on that same portion of the roof is concerning in terms of causing a visual disruption. The

Commission would prefer that being reduced to 1 panel with the top aligned with the others. The Commission noted that there are a lot of different panels around the house and they want to know the plan for any associated conduits – are they running into roof with the conduits in attic space or are they all on outside of the house? Need to know that impact on the exterior. The Applicant replied that they can make the conduit be not visible by running it through the attic. The Commission noted that it would want the conduits to be minimally visible and would need to see where it is precisely located while noting that the back roof is not under our jurisdiction, but panels shown on top of plan and ones on front portion of side roof are so if inside attic that is preferred but if something else is happening, need to see the detail. Doesn't matter whether a rental or not, needs to be consistent with the guidelines and the 4 panels on the front are disruptive to the aesthetics of the structure and those locations would have to change. S. Makowka suggested that the approval be contingent on applicant proving new plans removing the 4 modules and noting the placement of conduit and requiring monitor approval before installation.

Public comment: D. Seltzer said it looked like not all those solar panels will lay flat on roof and that a good portion will stick up at an angle. Only 11 of the panels will be flat from his view. M. Cordero clarified that all the proposed panels are mounted 3 inches high with the rails and all are parallel on the existing surface of the roof. S. Makowka noted that any approval can clarify that there is no contemplation of elevating any of the panels on an inclined rack not parallel to the roof surface. Applicant again confirmed that the proposal is for panels parallel to roof surface.

Motion to approve application made by C. Barry subject to conditions that 1) the 3 panels on Jason St elevation be removed and 1 panel on uphill side (south elevation) be removed and remaining odd panel align with the top of the other panels on that elevation; 2) conduits not be visible from exterior and inverters and that other gear with the exception of the required disconnect be inside the house. B. Labau seconded for discussion. A suggestion was made to include the condition that all panels will be installed parallel to existing roof surface. C. Barry amended motion, B. Labau seconded. Roll Call for 14 Jason application – Barry-y, Baldwin-y, Tee-y, Worden-y, Chaves-y, Cohen-y, Melofchik-y. Unanimous approval.

16 Jason application presented – 23 modules to be roof mounted. S. Makowka asked about the 2 panels on roof section 3 in the provided plan: Are they visible from the street? The Applicant responded that they would be hidden from street view by the cross gables of the roof. Given the fact that the proposed panels are in rear or shielded by cross gable from the street, S. Makowka stated that he has no problem with this proposal. The Applicant confirmed that these are the same panels as proposed for first structure – black on black. There will be a black roof also and conduits will be in attic as well. Conduits at back of house are options as well. The proposed power cut off is located on front left so same condition as on other structure for supporting equipment.

C. Barry moved approval as submitted subject to the conditions that qualification that conduits be run internally and all gear (inverters etc) will be inside except for the disconnect that will be located as shown on plans. B. Cohen seconded. Roll Call – Baldwin-y, Barry-y, Tee-y, Worden-y, Chaves-y, Cohen-y, Melofchik-y. Unanimous approval.

Monitors appointed for both certificates– Melofchik and Baldwin.

- c. **Continuation of Formal Hearing for 149 Pleasant Street (FTO Realty Tr) for demolition to top of foundation of existing 1947 ranch and construction of new 2 ½ story house.** S. Makowka reminded participants that this is a continuation of the hearing and that the Commission is moving thru its multi-step process for considering new structures. The Commission is currently in the step 2 discussion focused on whether the proposed mass and scale is appropriate for this site in the District. He noted that the Applicant has responded to feedback from last meeting and asked that the initial discussion tonight be kept to issues around size and massing and overall visual impact. D. Baldwin noted for the record that he missed the last month's meeting but has since watched the video of entire meeting and is eligible to continue sitting on this hearing actively.

M. Penzenik gave presentation for Applicant. Because of the number of openings they will be going into the foundation, they are now proposing to demolish the existing foundation and rebuild it in the same location with new foundation to have stucco facing. Changes shown on new plans submitted for 2/22/24 meeting. She noted that with change to parking, they need 2 curb cuts approved. The Commission noted that while we can note our concerns for parking in front as reason for parking in rear, the AHDC can't override zoning or other regulations. Also, the Commission can't interpret the zoning codes around setbacks, etc. J. Worden asked about the parking off Gray Street and the retaining walls shown in the drawings. The Applicant noted that they will be poured concrete with stone facing. J. Worden noted that they may have to go to the ZBA after us for additional approvals. The Commission noted that for any stepped stone walls in back – think about how that works – not cinder block – any would need to look like fieldstone walls etc. The Applicant stated there will also be a low retaining wall to hold back the slope in the front. And that there is a 17' drop across the property from highest point to lowest point. The revised plans also show window bumpouts (boxed bays) on the front elevation. C Tee asked about the 2 front doors on the front of the house. Applicant explained that there are 2 units entering in the front and the 3<sup>rd</sup>, lower level unit, is entered from the driveway side. C. Barry asked if a shared vestibule with 1 door outside might have more of an airlock? Response – M. Penzenik feels it would take away from entry experience going in the unit. She noted that the front view also shows the changes in roof in response to the Commissions requests. The Commission noted that the change creates a visual break that really emphasizes main roof structure in the way that some other examples on Pleasant St do – appreciates the changes. The shingle is consistent with other examples – blends well into the roof as well. Question about change from gable to shed dormer on front – M. Penzenik replied that she felt that in putting on the box bays, changing to a shed roof was more harmonious. The Commission was positive about changes to front porch and the box bays. M. Penzenik said that 170 Pleasant Street was inspiration.

B. LaBau asked about basement level being stone veneer instead of stucco. M. Penzenik stated that the client did not want to do that finish. In materials she notes that material is parged. C. Barry understands that the owner doesn't like, but a brick or stone foundation is a much stronger precedent consistent with the other structures identified by the Applicant. The Commission clarified that it doesn't have to be a solid brick or stone foundation, it can be concrete with a full brick veneer. C. Barry

Stated that this change deals with the massing issue – makes it look more natural. Stone to match retaining walls might be nice, but it becomes a cost issue. B. LaBau curious about the material on the horizontal soffit – response: painted wood beadboard. Very appropriate. S. Makowka noted that we are focused on size and massing so let's hold off on discussing details until next meeting. M. Penzenick noted that she has not provided a 3D view, since the way that she constructs drawings is not conducive to programs to version to 3d so she called out and shadowed all the elevations to assist the Commission.

A Commissioner noted that the roofline change makes a huge difference. The dormer just looks a little blank – lots of wall vs amount of window. If window could be a double maybe that would help a bit on the coming from Rt 2. M. Penzenick suggested maybe a casement that looks like a double hung might work and she will investigate. The Commission noted that it would reduce amount of shingled wall and will give more light inside. M. Penzenick invited to view approved dormer at 14 Wellington to see an example. She will look at it and get back to us. Don't want to lose symmetry on the house. B. Cohen asked about the rear – is low enough for no railing? Response – yes 18”.

Public Comment: D. Seltzer commented he likes the design but is afraid it is not compatible with state regulations. Before this goes much further it would be advisable for the Applicant to check with building inspector and check with accessibility laws. 1500 Mass Ave is 80% completed but facing an issue because there is no accessibility to the dwelling units – be sure this is dealt with before you get too far. The citation in the State code that handles new construction with 3 units or more is not well known and causes problems down the road. It's State law and not the international building code. 521CMAR has jurisdiction. Because it is a slope lot all 3 units are considered to be ground level units and must similarly comply. 1 way to maybe make it comply is to do away with ground level apt and make duplex and put parking under the building. He sees at least 5 zoning bylaw variances – he and M. Penzenik will discuss offline.

K. Lubar had a few questions – 1) is new foundation going to be same footprint – no, it's slightly bigger and has been that way from the first hearing (the existing foundation is 27' along sides and they increased it to 30'. She confirmed that the front width is staying the same. 2) Coming up Gray the veneer concrete wall by the proposed parking – how tall is it? Response: Don't know yet, will have to be worked out on site. K. Lubar's concern is that driving up Gray you'll be looking into a fairly steep poured concrete wall and are adding another one. Response: there are retaining walls are all over Arlington. 2 sheer walls driving up Gray and then another one along Pleasant. K. Lubar said you are going to see the walls, not great and a concern.

There was a discussion of how much wall would be visible since it appears highest portion would be at end of driveway facing away from Gray Street given the slope of the lot. S. Makowka said we want walls to blend in and be as compatible as possible. Coming from Mass Ave elevation shown. Grade TBD and steps need to be added still to drawings. View with other houses shown. S. Makowka asked for actual difference in proposed ridge height of this structure and house on the right. The drawings each structure height from grade but not from a common grade so we need to know difference in ridge height or the difference in the elevation of the grades used.

He asked for a quick review of the details so if there are questions or clarifications she has opportunity to address before next month. All windows to be wood, trim 1 x 5 with back band wood, fiberglass gutters but would like copper as an option. Round painted aluminum down spouts (copper style). Foundation notes will be changed per discussion. Porch elements all wood except for columns (Turncraft), powder coated steel railings or handrail on front wood stairs. The Commission noted that the porch roof could be different railings than the front handrails – they approved wrought iron on Academy Street and Irvington – may come up for discussion.

M. Penzenik agreed to continuance to March 21, 2024. She needs to discuss how they will handle the accessibility issue and if they make a change to number of units that they are – if this becomes 2 instead of 3 that may make a difference on the entry and parking. There may be changes from tonight's discussion. S. Makowka clarified that the Commission approves the project as a whole at end. Per guidelines at the end of step 2, he will ask if any reason to deny based on massing and scale based on what we have seen at that point – if no one makes a motion to deny, we will keep moving forward to next step. He summarized for next month, if the Applicant makes a significant change we will need to review that, but if no changes what we want to see is any changes from foundation feedback, the difference in the height of the ridge relative to each other from a common point. He wants to know for the record how much taller it is. Parking clarifications will be helpful.

- d. **Formal hearing for 17 Jason Street (Hatem) for solar panel installation.** P. Hatem shared screen and gave presentation. Proposal is to add 14 solar panels. Challenge is that best solar exposure is also front of the house. However, they are proposing panels in 3 groups. 1<sup>st</sup> on garage (6 panels), 2<sup>nd</sup> on flat roof (3 panels), 3<sup>rd</sup> group (5 panels) on main roof of the front façade. The Commission noted that this house is situated well back from Jason Street basically behind other existing structures is has limited visibility from a few locations such as Jason Court. Roof plan shown. They wanted to minimize the number so that there is a roof with a minimum number of panels rather than a roof full of panels. S. Makowka asked if panels on the flat roof are mounted flat? Response – yes, they are flat on that roof. S. Makowka asked about effect of chimney shadow on group C limiting the solar gain? P. Hatem responded that installer reviews how the sun moves around the chimney and that new technology gets around the shadows affecting all panels. He confirmed that this structure is set back a long way from Jason Street and that the conduits are in the attic and won't be visible. C. Barry asked if, instead of having notch in group C, the Applicant could stack panels instead with another row on top. The Applicant would consider that change if acceptable to the Commission. C. Barry noted that 6 in a rectangle would be more like the arrangement on the garage roof and look simpler and less busy. Leave lower 2 and add 1 and two above. Applicant likes the idea of 6 too. The Commission noted that this does not set a precedent for any other structure proposing panels of a front elevation because of how far back this particular structure is from Jason St as well as other houses and the chimney blocking some of view. This is set back even from Jason Court and this is a secondary view. The Applicant clarified that any exterior conduit would be on side of house and that there is an electric panel inside the garage with underground conduit that runs to the house to another panel inside the basement. There will be an external cutoff on lower right hand side of house.

B. Cohen moved to approve application subject to the conditions that the panels on main house roof be reconfigured to be 6 panels (2 wide by 3 rows high) noting that the approval of these solar panels on front facing roof is not a precedent because of the remote aspect of this particular structure from the adjoining streets. C. Barry seconded motion for discussion. It was suggested that the approval specify that all roof connections will be made to the inside the structure and that monitor approve all elements of final plan prior to installation. B. Cohen amended her motion to include this language and C. Barry seconded amended motion. Roll call – Baldwin-y, Barry-y, Tee-y, Worden-y, Chaves-y, Cohen-y, Melofchik-y. Unanimous approval. Monitor appointed - Melofchik and Baldwin.

- e. **Continuation of Formal Hearing for 49 Academy St (Baldwin) for decorative front railing.** D. Baldwin approved continuation until next month due to late time of 10:15pm.

## **6. Old Business**

- a. Special Town Meeting and related discussions
- b. *Discussion of ZOOM vs in-person AHDC meetings*
- c. Report from Streetscape sub-committee
- d. Modification of Design Guidelines (Little Libraries, Below Grade Windows)
- e. AHDC Public Input Meeting

- 7. **Meeting Adjourns. C. Barry moved to adjourn and B. Cohen seconded. Unanimous approval to adjourn at 1013pm.**